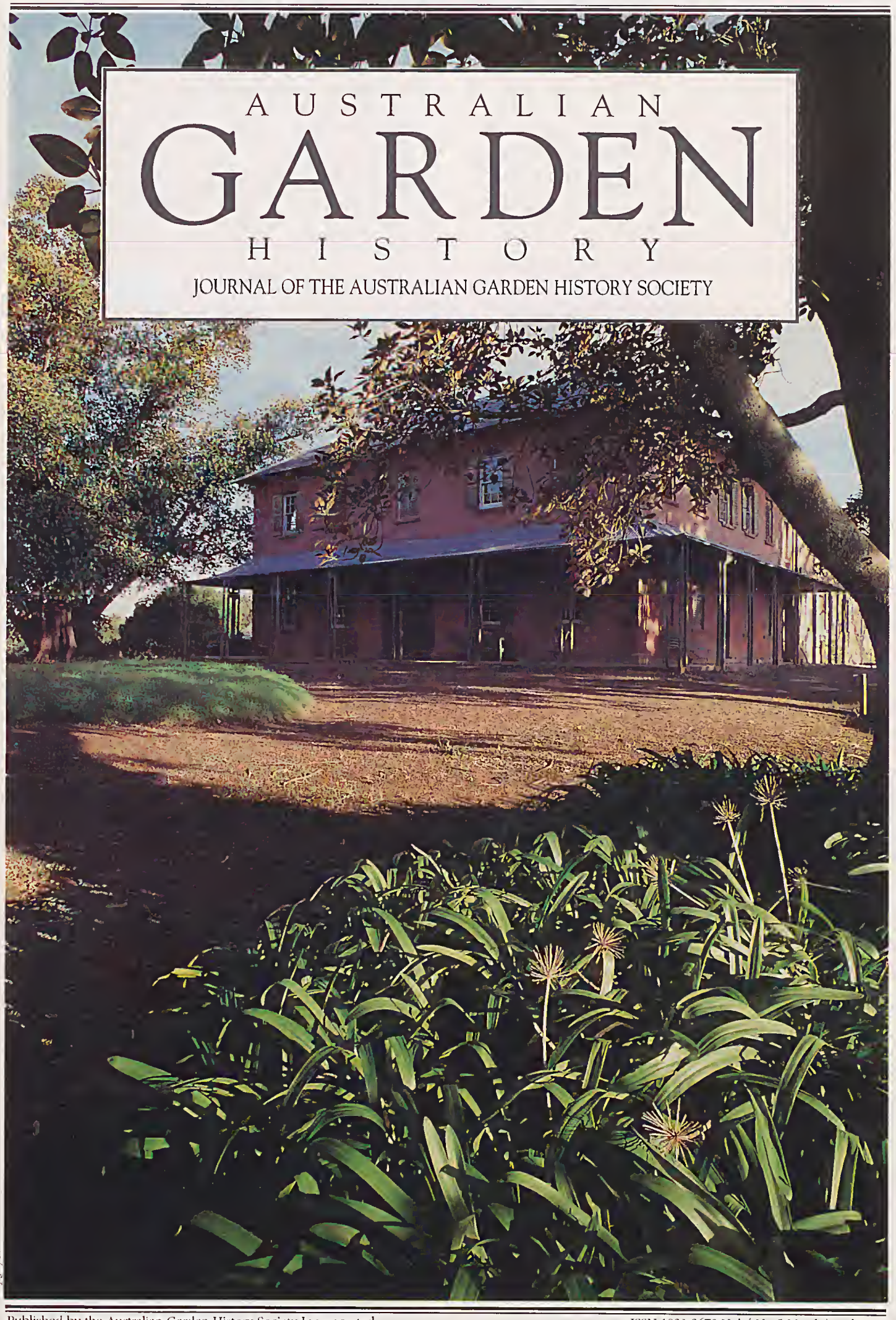
AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY

JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY



Ray Joyce

Published by the Australian Garden History Society Incorporated

ISSN 1033-3673 Vol 4 No 5 March/April 1993

Contributors

Michael Bogle is a curator of the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales. Formerly at Rouse Hill House, he is now based at Vaucluse House.

Julie Delahunt is a recent graduate of VCAH – Burnley. Her research on Rupertswood was supported by a student award from the Victorian Branch of the Australian Garden History Society.

Brian Morley is the Director of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide and State Herbarium.

Cover: View of Rouse Hill House, Windsor, New South Wales (see article by Michael Bogle on page 11)

Autumn in Victoria

Tour of Gardens in the Western District
A Garden History Tour
Departing Melbourne
APRIL 21-26, 1993
$735.00

The tour visits private gardens and homesteads in the Western District of Victoria around Dunkeld, Hamilton, Coleraine, Casterton and Hexham. Among the gardens to be visited on the tour are 'Kornong', 'Nareen', 'North Gate', 'Murndal', a fine surviving Edwardian garden along with two outstanding ***Edna Walling Gardens 'Ardgarten' and 'Boortkoi'.***
We will also visit 'Spring Creek', 'Minjah', 'Woolongoon', 'Dalvui' and 'Titanga' as well as gardens in the Skipton and Ballarat district including the 'Lal Lal' Estate.

For reservations and further information for this tour and also our

Tasmanian Gardens Tour

OCTOBER 10-15, 1993
$712.00

Contact Garden History Tour Organiser
Helen Andersson
Wildes Meadow Road
Wildes Meadow 2577 NSW
Tel: 048 864 337 Fax: 048 864 295

Branches

ACT/MONARO/RIVERINA BRANCH
Mr Bruce English
GPO Box 1630
Canberra ACT 2601
Ph: (06) 247 0665

QUEENSLAND BRANCH
Ms Jan Seto
PO Box 459
Toowong Qld 4066
Ph: (07) 393 2254

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH
Mr Trevor Nottle
Walnut Hill, 5 Walker Street
Stirling SA 5152
Ph: (08) 339 4210

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS/SOUTHERN NSW BRANCH
Mrs Elizabeth Webster
Salisbury Downs
Blanket Flat
Bigga NSW 2583
Ph. (048) 352 205
Fax (048) 352 325

SYDNEY AND NORTHERN NSW BRANCH
Mrs Beth Bond
27 Cardinal Avenue
Beecroft NSW 2119
Ph: (02) 484 2941

TASMANIAN BRANCH
Mrs Fairie Nielsen
Pigeon Hill, RSD 469
Burnie Tas 7320
Ph: (004) 33 0077

VICTORIAN BRANCH
Ms Gini Lee
c/– Royal Botanic Gardens
Birdwood Avenue
South Yarra Vic 3141
Ph/Fax: (03) 650 5043

WEST AUSTRALIAN BRANCH
Ms Anne Willox
PO Box 1323
Subiaco WA 6008
Ph: (09) 381 1675

The Australian Garden History Society was formed in 1980 to bring together those with an interest in the various aspects of garden history—horticulture, landscape design, architecture and related subjects. Its prime concern is to promote interest and research into historic gardens as a major component of the National Estate. It aims to look at garden making in a wide historic, literary, artistic and scientific context.

The editorial content of articles, or the products and services advertised in this journal, do not necessarily imply their endorsement by the Australian Garden History Society.

CHAIRMAN	Margaret Darling
TREASURER	Robin Lewarne
SECRETARY	Lester Tropman
JOURNAL EDITOR	David Beaver
	1st Floor, 115 George St
	Sydney 2000
	Ph (02) 251 3250, Fax (02) 251 6109

Correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary, AGHS, C/– Royal Botanic Gardens, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra, Victoria 3141. Ph/Fax (03) 650 5043.

Adelaide City Squares and G.W. Francis

North Terrace, Adelaide, South Australia 5000

The article on Adelaide City Squares by Ashley Russell (Vol. 4, No. 3, 1992) made no reference to the work of George William Francis (1800-1865), the first Director of the Adelaide Botanic Garden, who prior to that appointment was engaged by the Adelaide City Council to lay out all of the Adelaide squares in 1854. At that time Francis had been reappointed City Valuator.

To quote Barbara Best (*George William Francis, First Director of the Adelaide Botanic Garden*, privately printed, Adelaide, 1986):

> Although Victoria Square was fenced with posts and rails in 1851, it was not until 23 February 1854 that tenders were invited for laying out the square 'with a view to its being planted with trees, shrubs, etc. and otherwise ornamentally adapted for the healthful recreation of the citizens – the centre of the northern division being reserved as a future site for a public fountain'.
>
> Francis' tender was accepted and he was also requested to lay out and plant the four smaller squares, Whitmore, Light, Hurtle and Hindmarsh. He was appointed to do this work in March, but it seems he waited for a better season before commencing the work. (Best p. 48)

Best continues,

> Francis commenced the laying out and planting of the city squares and on 6 June the *Register* reported:
>
> 'Several men were engaged yesterday in grubbing up the trees and other operations preparatory to the commencement in earnest by Mr Francis the contractor to lay out and plant the northern portion of Victoria Square. The approved design which will be carried out immediately, is described as "comprising a central plot of diamond shape with concave sides, laid down in a permanently green grass". Four large beds are to be planted with trees along and outside of the central plot, and surrounded by an oval border twenty five feet wide, in which it is intended to form a belt of trees, shrubs and plants, realising at some future day, a counterpart of Goldsmith's celebrated "Hawthorn shade for talking age and whisp'ring lovers made".
>
> The walks, sixteen feet in width, are to be levelled and gravelled properly and the whole northern portion of the square is to be enclosed with a substantial and elegant iron railing, immediately within which is to be a hedge of Sweetbriar and other Roses. So far the present contract extends; but it is to be hoped that further improvements will include additional embellishments; if it is too much to expect specimens of statuary, we may at least hope for that graceful accompaniment of green trees and flowering shrubs, a sparkling fountain, while a sundial would be a silent but eloquent monitor of the flight of time to all who love to lounge in pleasant places. It is to be regretted that but one moiety of the square is to be improved this season, and that the month of June should be arrived before even the present work was commenced. We understand Mr Francis intends to plant not merely forest trees, such as Gum, She-Oak, etc., but Oleanders, Olives, Roses, Native Cherry, Cypresses, Broom-trees and others.'
>
> Francis obtained the Council's permission to purchase the removed posts and rails lately forming the fence in Victoria Square no doubt to replace those continually being destroyed at the Old Botanic Garden. On 3 July the City Council resolved to spend a sum of forty pounds on planting Palmer Place, North Adelaide and it accepted an offer by Francis to plant this area. He planted four hundred and fifty trees and shrubs, much to the pleasure of the Council. The following month he was involved in carrying out the 1855 assessment of the City. Francis then set to work to complete the planting of the squares and the colonists learned that; 'The laying out and planting of Victoria Square has been completed according to the tasteful design and specifications of the talented contractor. When the numerous Poplars, Cypresses, Acacias, Sumachs, Olives and the various other shrubs in Victoria Square shall have two or three years growth, they will have become pleasantly ornamental and stimulative of that march of improvement which has been aided by a liberal grant from public treasury, and will doubtless be fostered by Municipal votes and generous contributions of wealthy individuals'.
>
> Francis had estimated the cost of fencing and planting Victoria Square at six hundred and thirty pounds and for the other squares at eight hundred and fifty pounds. The local government had apparently allocated the sum of two thousand pounds for the specific purpose of fencing and planting all the public squares. Eventually one thousand one hundred and six pounds, thirteen shillings and eight pence was spent on improving Victoria Square alone. (Best pp. 51-52)
>
> Francis was well aware of the difficulty of finding suitable civic plantings for the Adelaide Plains in the 1850s: 'The acquisition of shade and the agreeable appearance of trees in lines and avenues are evidently the chief causes for the planting of trees in the wider streets, terraces, and squares of a city, and to bind the roads adjoining or leading to it. Bearing this in mind the planter is much circumscribed in his choice. Few trees are applicable to such purposes and some of them are objectionable on other accounts. They must be handsome at all times, umbraceous [*sic*], durable, of rapid growth, and of course suitable to the climate. In a country like this, the greatest difficulties to contend with are heat, drought, and hardness of soil around the trees when planted. For obvious reasons, we must exclude all deciduous trees … Of evergreen trees we are driven to a small selection. Those of tropical growth are destroyed by the frosts of winter. We have therefore only the evergreen oak, the olive, and the various gum trees the … Blue and Red gum here are indicative of strong, stiff soil, while the Peppermint gum grows invariably upon that which is sandy. How far these circumstances can be reversed with immunity, experience has not shown.'
>
> The soil of Adelaide is for the most part strong loam or else limestone, which seems to agree well with the Blue and Red gum; and as these are rapid-growing, noble, umbrageous trees, easy to preserve and suited to the climate, they are to be preferred to all others. (Best p. 81)

Francis was also asked in 1855 to supervise the supply of trees and shrubs for the then new Government House Grounds, and he was given general oversight of the vice-regal garden. (Best p. 79)

This practice has continued to this day with a brief interruption some years ago. Francis' plantings and later ones made by Schomburgk, the second director of Adelaide Botanic Garden, have recently been rejuvenated in a programme which began in 1988. This has involved the removal of more than seventy unthrifty or diseased trees, their replacement with sympathetic species and the enlarging of the garden beds to provide a better sense of scale and continuity of appropriate seasonal colour.

Thus not only was George Francis instrumental in helping to create the botanic garden system in South Australia; he is the forgotten first landscape architect of the Adelaide City Squares and deserves to be remembered as such.

Dr B D Morley, Director
The Botanic Gardens of Adelaide and State Herbarium
December 1992

The Old Palm House

Its conservation by the Adelaide Botanic Garden

The earliest conservatories can be traced to the Romans, who built structures clad with small sheets of mica. These buildings kept plants warm while allowing sufficient light to enable growth during inclement weather.

Conservatories, as we would recognise them today, did not evolve until glass-making technology was relatively sophisticated and it was possible to manufacture large sheets of glass. Until that stage glazing systems were multi-faceted, rectilinear and conservatories almost invariably employed wooden glazing bars. The life expectancy of a wooden conservatory was, and still is, about seventy years, even using hardwoods such as teak.

The arrival of the Industrial Revolution proved a boost in the evolution of conservatories. Technological advances enabled the production of curved sheets of glass and there were exciting developments using cast and wrought iron glazing systems. Iron conservatories were in vogue and the modern manufacturing techniques led to pre-fabrication and mass production.

These technological improvements combined with the greater wealth in Europe and burgeoning colonial expansion led to a dramatic increase in iron conservatory construction, in private houses as well as public places, during the mid nineteenth century.

The Adelaide Botanic Garden was established in 1855 and since that time has sought to provide glasshouse displays. The first Director, George Francis, who held the position from 1855-65, was instrumental in the building of a wooden and iron conservatory on the western boundary of the Garden. This first conservatory was imported from England and typical of its genre. Unfortunately it no longer survives, being demolished during the 1930s when that particular part of the Garden was absorbed by the expansion of the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

The second Director, Dr Richard Schomburgk (1865-1891) was responsible for the building of the Palm House, which is the subject of the present conservation, as well as the Victoria House and the Museum of Economic Botany.

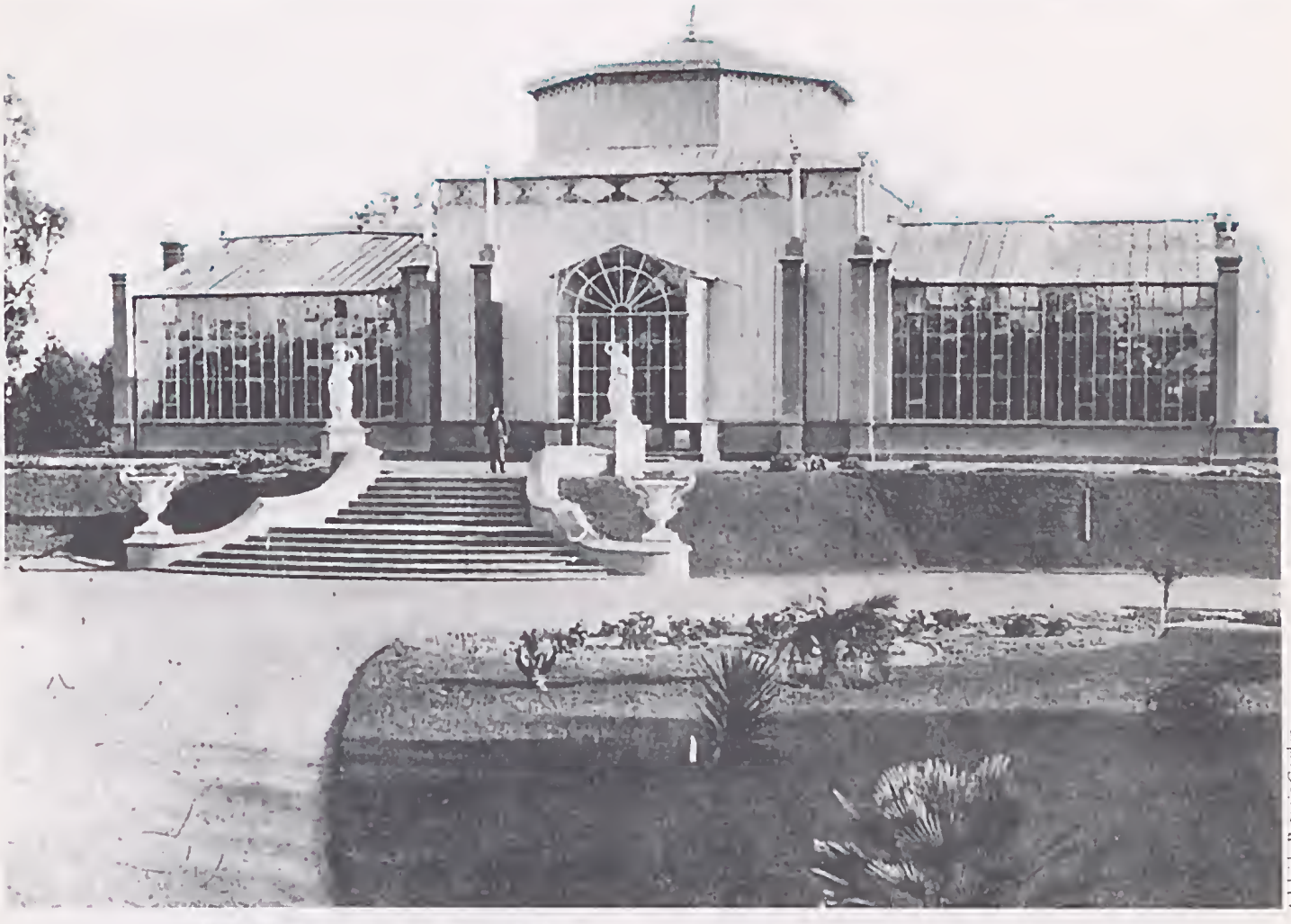
Schomburgk realised the limitations of the existing glasshouse facilities and in his report in 1873, he described the need for a new glasshouse because of the size of the plants.

> We have at present barely sufficient room to afford accommodation and display the extensive and valuable collection of plants, and as overcrowding is so dangerous for them, it is indispensably necessary to their health and safety that means should be found to erect a new and commodious structure which is now so much required.

The Palm House, Adelaide Botanic Gardens



Adelaide Botanic Garden



Adelaide Botanic Garden

The Palm House, 1876, viewed from the southern entrance with formal steps and on a raised terrace



Adelaide Botanic Garden

The Palm House viewed from the southern entrance with the informal entrance of 1922 which has since been removed

The Palm House was manufactured in Germany by J. Hoper in Bremen and designed by the distinguished Gustav Runge. Schomburgk was aware of Runge's expertise because he had designed a similar conservatory Schomburgk had heard of for a certain Herr Rothermund. Runge was obviously a noted architect as he had previously designed the Breman Customs House and the Philadelphia Opera House.

There are very few of these German iron conservatories still in existence as the rigours of corrosion and war made it unusual for them to survive the twentieth century.

The Director's estimation of the cost was about £1,400, provided from a special government grant. There was great excitement at the Gardens when the Palm House was imported in 1875 as it was considered state-of-the-art at the time of its manufacture. The building is mainly fabricated from puddled wrought-iron and glass and demonstrates

classical design features. There are very few of these German iron conservatories still in existence as the rigours of corrosion and war made it unusual for them to survive the twentieth century. We are most fortunate to have such a splendid example of this type of construction available to the public in Australia.

The Palm House is one hundred feet long and thirty feet wide and comparable in size to many of its contemporaries in Europe. When it was finally finished and opened in January 1877, the total cost was £3,800, which did not include the glazing and painting done by staff within the Garden.

Schomburgk was thoroughly delighted with the result and he supervised the transfer of plants into his pride and joy. They included a sixteen foot high decorative palm surrounded by plants with variegated leaves, plus a collection of tree ferns from Queensland, New Zealand and Port Natal. Climbing plants were placed on the eight pillars surrounding the rotunda and smaller displays alongside the red and blue tiled pathways.

There was great excitement at the Gardens when the Palm House was imported in 1875 as it was considered state-of-the-art at the time of its manufacture

Pleased though Schomburgk was with the result, it was barely three months later he wrote in his report, 'No doubt the whole undertaking is a great success; but as there is nothing perfect in this world, so it is with the Palm House, it should be at least twice as large'.

Interestingly, the suspended glass curtain-walling technique which characterises the Adelaide Palm House is a precursor to the suspended glass cladding of many modern tower blocks. The reason the Palm House has survived so well is because of the arid climate in Adelaide and the careful maintenance of the building by the Botanic Garden. However, in 1980 it was resolved that the Botanic Garden's Board would begin planning for its full conservation.

'No doubt the whole undertaking is a great success; but as there is nothing perfect in this world, so it is with the Palm House, it should be at least twice as large'

The Palm House is a clearly recognisable measure of both the age of the Garden and the quality of design and technology used in the construction of the building 117 years ago. The completion and opening of the Adelaide Bicentennial Conservatory in 1989 enabled the transfer from the Palm House of educational displays to a larger and more modern home, and focussed continuing interest and support in the old Palm House. The two structures in Adelaide have been likened in engineering and design significance to their Parisian counterparts of the Eiffel Tower and I. M. Pei's glass pyramid in the courtyard of the Louvre.

The first stage of conservation of the Palm House began in 1982 when the southern steps and terrace were reinstated. This involved the removal of an informal rock garden which was created in 1922 by the fourth Director J. F. Bailey (1917-1932). The northern steps and terrace will be reinstated as part of the current conservation. The existing cactus collection will be relocated to the Hackney depot site.

The conservation of the fabric of the building will include the careful labelling of all components which will then be dismantled, conserved or repaired in a controlled workshop and then reassembled in accordance with the findings of a Conservation Plan. As much of the original glass will be used as is possible to preserve the building's unique nineteenth century atmosphere. The Conservation Plan was completed in 1990-91 and a Dilapidation Survey completed in 1991-92. Dismantling will begin in February 1993 and it is hoped the conservation will be complete by March 1994 in time for the Adelaide Festival of Arts.

In 1968 the original formal internal landscape was removed to permit a more flexible planting scheme with the loss of the moulded edging to beds and tessellated floor tiles. This formal interior will return as part of the conservation works and used to feature an educational display of Madagascan plants. These plants have the advantage of low water requirements which will help conserve the fabric of the building for future generations.

The two structures in Adelaide have been likened in engineering and design significance to their Parisian counterparts of the Eiffel Tower and I. M. Pei's glass pyramid in the courtyard of the Louvre

In February 1992, a $1.1 million allocation for the conservation of the old Palm House was announced by the Federal Government. Prior to the announcement, a successful fund-raising programme had been co-ordinated through the media, community and Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide. The generosity and enthusiasm of the public inspired both the State and Federation Governments into making significance contributions. Public donations have now reached more than $60,000 and this strong public and private support is gratefully acknowledged.

Brian Morley

References

Anon (1992) *Adelaide Botanic Garden Palm House*, (unpublished SACON Report: Adelaide)

Best, B. J. (1986) *George William Francis, first Director of the Adelaide Botanic Garden*, (Privately printed: Adelaide)

Payne, P. (1992) in *William Shakespeare's Adelaide 1860-1930*, ed. B. Dickey, Developing Adelaide Botanic Garden 1965-1891, 126-146 (Association of Professional Historians: Adelaide)

History and Conservation of Rupertswood

On the Macedon Road, just north of the township of Sunbury, in Victoria, a set of elaborate stone and iron-work gates denote the entrance to Rupertswood. It was upon this property that William Sangster created a once magnificent 'Victorian picturesque' garden – a garden that encompassed sixty acres of land, stretching from the entrance to surround the Italianate mansion.

Scots born, Sangster was a trained landscape gardener and nurseryman. Having migrated to Australia in 1852, he worked briefly at the Melbourne Botanic Gardens. Following this, he was employed at the private garden of Mount Pleasant, in South Yarra. In 1855, Sangster became gardener and overseer of Como and he remained at this South Yarra property for ten years. During his time there, Sangster created a large 'picturesque' style garden, over most of the property. Along with work on the garden, he conducted research, involving the degree of suitability of numerous, newly introduced, exotic species to the Melbourne climate. In his own time Sangster operated his own landscape design business.

1866 saw the formation of a partnership between Sangster and, fellow Scot, William Taylor. The result of this was the Vice Regal Nursery, later known as Taylor and Sangster's Nursery and Florist, in Toorak Road, Toorak. Taylor operated the nursery, with Sangster conducting his landscape gardening business from the site. Plants for Sangster's metropolitan jobs were supplied from the Toorak nursery. In time, the partners expanded, with the opening of a second nursery at Macedon. This provided Sangster with a plant source for rural sites.

Sangster's landscape work encompassed both public and private gardens, in rural and metropolitan regions. As an advocate of 'Victorian picturesque' design, to use the words of his biographer John Foster, his landscapes possess a 'picturesque' framework into which was slotted a diverse range of botanically individual plants. This ideal of design involves the combining of the principles of two individual design schools, the 'picturesque', and the later 'Victorian'.

Sangster imbued the landscape with his individual design qualities. The exploitation of space involved alteration of natural landform, through excavation and fill, to adjust the user's view, both in and out of the garden area. A fine example of this is seen at the garden of Rippon Lea, Elsternwick. Here, Sangster recommended the construction of a hill, beside the lake. This resulted in adding a third dimension, that of height, to a totally flat site. The hill also adds to the size of the garden, by allowing the user to achieve a view, for many kilometres, beyond the garden's own boundary.



Simon Cristopher

Mature conifers dominate the surviving planting at Rupertswood

The second of Sangster's trademarks was the manipulation of time. This aimed to lend a timeless element to the garden site, by retaining mature, well established vegetation. The gnarled eucalypts of Rupertswood were left standing, to convey a feeling of age to what was, in fact, a newly created garden.

In 1874, these principles of design became part of the Rupertswood property. During construction of the property's residence, William John Clarke, then owner, employed William Sangster to design and construct the garden of the property; a garden to cover approximately sixty acres.

View to Rupertswood, 1992, showing its setting amidst the volcanic plains of Sunbury



Simon Cristopher



LaTrobe Collection, State Library of Victoria

Late nineteenth century view to Rupertswood across the lake

The landscape components Sangster gave to this piece of grazing land included:

- *an extensive, broadly sweeping driveway and elaborate pathway system* – a 'picturesque' principle, used to signify wealth and allow for the creation of views and vistas.
- *an undulating landform, of both natural and man-made origin* – ground shaping was a common practice in 'picturesque' design. It allowed the creation of an aesthetically pleasing form, and developed micro-climates within the site.
- *a lake, of artificial construction, weired under the main driveway* – broad stretches of water, generally weired under the road, were common with the 'picturesque' and its romantic ideals. A lake also attracted birdlife and extended the recreational use of the garden.
- *diverse vegetation* – the display of plants as individually interesting objects was a singularly Victorian practice, lending a feeling of the creation of a botanic garden to a garden site. Vegetation had a combined use, as a display piece and as structural components of the design.
- *densely forested areas* – Victorian style shrubberies allowed for the combining of many plants, whether climatically or visually related. Simultaneously, they formed vegetative walls, which provided structure, defined areas of the garden, and created view lines.
- *open glades* – open spaces were part of the free design of both the 'picturesque' and 'Victorian' schools. In contrast with densely vegetated areas, they defined internal and external views and vistas, and provided 'rooms' within the enclosure of the garden.
- *microclimate* – sheltered hillsides, an excavated fern gully, a sculpted rockery, the lake edge and its banks, all provided differing climates within the general climatic conditions of the overall site. Species suited to individual niches became part of the vegetation and design of, the garden, with the provision of such areas; a true 'Victorian' practice.
- *recreational lawns and a sporting ground* – as should be true of all landscape design, the garden Rupertswood reflected its owners and their needs. A tennis court, croquet lawn and cricket oval allowed the playing of the then popular sports, and depicted the hobbies and interests of the former owners.

Plants placed into the landscape at Rupertswood would generally have been supplied from Taylor and Sangster's Macedon nursery. Plants at the height of fashion and those available only by import would have been easily afforded by Rupertswood's owners. Thus, many recently introduced species would have been incorporated into the design.

Today, little remains of the many plants once part of the garden. What does remain is interesting and informative.

As was popular in the late nineteenth century large conifers were planted throughout the site. Aleppo Pine (*Pinus halepensis*) are used as windbreaks and avenue

plantings. Canary Island Pine (*Pinus canariensis*), Monterey Pine (*P. radiata*), Bunya Bunya Pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*), Hoop Pine (*A. cunninghamii*), Norfolk Island Pine (*A. heterophylla*), Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica 'glauca'*), Smooth Arizona Cypress (*Cupressus glabra*), C. *lusitanica*, Italian Cypress (*C. sempervirens* 'Stricta'), *C. torulosa*, and *Juniperus* sp. are used as structural points within the design, as components of shrubberies and as individual specimen trees. A hedge of Monterey Cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) stands at the entrance.

Elms (*Ulmus* sp.) were utilised for avenue plantings and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) as a hedge. Other popular trees included the Flame Tree (*Brachychiton acerifolius*) and Bottle Tree (*B. populneus*), Camphor Laurel (*Cinnamomum camphora*), Moreton Bay Fig (*Ficus macrophylla*), Silky Oak (*Grevillea robusta*), Primrose Tree (*Lagunaria patersonii*), the Turkey Oak, Holly Oak (*Quercus ilex*), English Oak, (*Q. robur*), Peppercorn (*Schinus areira*), Weeping willow (*Salix babylonica*), Pussy Willow (*S. caprea*) and Crack Willow (*S. fragilis*). Many Poplars and Elms are growing also, such as White Poplar (*Populus alba*), *P. nigra*, Lombardy Poplar (*P. nigra* 'Italica') and Siberian Elm (*Ulmus pumila*).

Shrubs and small trees once existed in shrubberies. Such species found at Rupertswood today are Hollies (*Ilex aquifolium* and *I. cornuta*), *Magnolia grandiflora*, Olive (*Olea europaea*), *Pittosporum* sp. including *P. undulatum*, Broom (*Spartium junceum*) and Lilacs (*Syringa vulgaris*). In addition there are many specimens of *Prunus* sp. and *Rosa* sp., including rose bushes and briar roses. Wisterias (*Wisteria japonica* and *W. sinensis*) grow along the verandas of the mansion.

Herbaceous plants include white *Agapanthus orientalis*, *Crocosmia aurea*, Iris, *Vinca major* and Native Violets (*Viola odorata*).

Less common plants used at Rupertswood by Sangster are *Afrocarpus falcata*, Carob (*Ceratonia saliqua*) and an Ivy Tree.

The popular Victorian species *Cordyline australis*, Canary Island Date Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) and Cape Honeysuckle (*Tecomaria capensis*) exist throughout the garden area. Succulents are also present, such as the inclusion of the Tree Aloe (*Aloe arborescens*) and *Agave americana*.

The written, pictorial and oral history of the garden of Rupertswood creates a more detailed picture of what previously existed on the site.

A rosery was contained in the turning circle, directly in front of the mansion's main entrance. Within the slope, to the mansion's south-west, was constructed a fern-gully. Roofed with arching and trellis work, it contained tree ferns, dwarf ferns, mosses and lichens.

A rockery was sited on the slope to the north-east of the lake. Surrounding the lake were extensive flower beds and shrubberies – one patch being entirely furnished with camellias of almost every variety.

The main drive to Rupertswood, pictured in late nineteenth century



LaTrobe Collection, State Library of Victoria

Throughout the garden stood groups of trees, including *Abies nordmanniana* and other *Abies* sp., *Araucaria araucana, A. cunninghamii* and other *Araucaria* sp,. cedars, *Picea* sp., *Taxodium* sp. and European larch. Large garden beds contained Dahlias, Tuberoses, perennial Phlox, Camellias and other seasonal flowers.

Historically, the garden of Rupertswood is significant for three reasons – because of its creator, William Sangster, its design in a rural setting, and its vegetative content. Added to this is the historically significant and vibrant, human history of the persons associated with the property.

To ensure that conservation is a worthwhile process, and is likely to occur, all the functions of the site must be taken into account during the development of the plan for conservation

This historically significant site is today used for the operation of a day and boarding school. Parts of the garden are utilised in association with the daily functioning of the institution. As well, the garden is also made use of by the public, and local sporting and recreational associations, for picnics, walking, football, cricket and athletics.

However, little or no attention is currently being focused upon the historic horticultural significance of the garden. So, in a slow but steady process, many components of the garden's design are being lost or altered. Moreover, additions to the site hold no regard for the garden as it has remained to this time.

In conducting research into the history of the property and the garden of Rupertswood, a conservation analysis for the garden area was developed. Within this document, policies and strategies have been recommended for the conservation of the site.

Conservation of the garden aims at retaining the historic significance of the site, by undertaking methods of adaption and reconstruction. Adaption involves modification to suit proposed compatible uses, while reconstruction refers to returning a garden, as nearly as possible, to an earlier form.

Research into Rupertswood brought to light the problems associated with a site which accommodates many functions and has a high level of use. Rupertswood is a historic garden, a historic residence and rural property, a secondary school, a playground, a sporting venue and a public park. The major problem lies in the conflict which arises between the users and the need for retention and enhancement of its historical significance.

To ensure that conservation is a worthwhile process, and is likely to occur, all the functions of the site must be taken into account during the development of the plan for conservation. Ways of reaching a compromise must be sought, to minimise the conflict between the uses and the conservation of the site. If conflict remains, it will forever stand as a barrier to the conservation process. Thus, it becomes the role of the horticulturist, not only to develop the conservation plan, but also to build into the plan a means of ensuring that conservation will occur.

Methods used within the conservation plan for Rupertswood were:

- *zoning and prioritising* – zoning looks at individual areas of the garden, in terms of the standard of conservation and/or development that will occur, in relation to the degree of significance of, and the impact and need of current and future use on an area. Prioritising aids in the development of maintenance plans, by addressing areas of the garden in regard to use levels, types of use, both present and future, and the expectations of the users, as to the condition and appearance of the area. Both these forms of ranking allow for conservation to be of worth to both the users and those advocating conservation.
- *recurrent and developmental maintenance* – recurrent maintenance is the day-to-day activity which occurs to keep the garden intact and of an accepted standard of appearance to the users. In total, it incorporates the people who perform the tasks, and the way in which such maintenance is carried out. Developmental maintenance is the activity performed day-to-day, which retains and enhances the historic significance of the site by achieving the goals of conservation. By adjusting the balance of these two forms of maintenance, in line with the current constraints which exist for a site, conservation can be achieved under any circumstances.
- *recommendations (long term goals)* – this involves providing guidelines, where immediate action cannot occur, by defining what should happen at a later date, should the opportunity for conservation become available. In this way the horticulturist ensures that the ideals of the conservation plan are documented, as part of the policies and strategies.
- *short term strategies* – in conjunction with recommendations, short term strategies can be used to remove, and/or relocate, unsympathetic structures and activities, from highly significant areas of the garden.
- *control of future use* – there is a need to study each future use, and the related garden area required by that use, on an individual basis. Then policies, strategies and recommendations can be written which address the necessity of the use, and the necessity of that use to occur within a particular region of the garden.

It is hoped that by juxtaposing the history and the present status of the garden, in the conservation analysis, people will realise the importance of Rupertswood in terms of the history of Victoria's settlement and the horticultural history of its vast garden. Along with such realisation, it is hoped, will grow the need to protect and retain what remains of the garden today. From this protective emotion a move can be made to enhance the site, through the process outlined in the conservation plan.

Through the process of conservation, Rupertswood could again be the magnificent and horticulturally rich 'Victorian picturesque' garden of its creator, William Sangster.

Julie Delahunt

Rouse Hill House

The historical development of the Gardens

Rouse Hill House, a property of the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, was begun in 1813 by Richard (1774-1852) and Elizabeth (1772-1849) Rouse. Richard was an Oxford-born free settler who arrived in 1801 aboard the Nile with Elizabeth and their two children.[1] A recent investigation of the gardens they established at Rouse Hill in the first quarter of the nineteenth century and the subsequent developments of the estate provides some surprising insights into the development of Australian domestic gardens.

After his arrival, Richard Rouse prospered in government service and accumulated property at a surprising rate. Although he maintained a residence in Parramatta, he established Rouse Hill House in 1813 and took five years to complete the Georgian-style sandstone house. The family did not fully transfer their residence to Rouse Hill until 1825.[2]

He was a man of the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century house he built and the layout of the gardens he established mirrored the conventional tastes of his generation. The detailing of the house's stonework, for example, is highly competent but looks without humour toward the Georgian past. Judged by contemporary tastes of the era, even Rouse's shaping of the rooms is hopelessly old-fashioned. A devastatingly accurate summary of the evidence for Rouse Hill's earliest interiors appears, for example, in Jane Austen's 1818 satirical novel *Persuasion:* 'Accordingly they (Anne and Mary) went, to sit the full half hour in the old fashioned square (wainscot) parlour with a small carpet and shining floor'.[3]

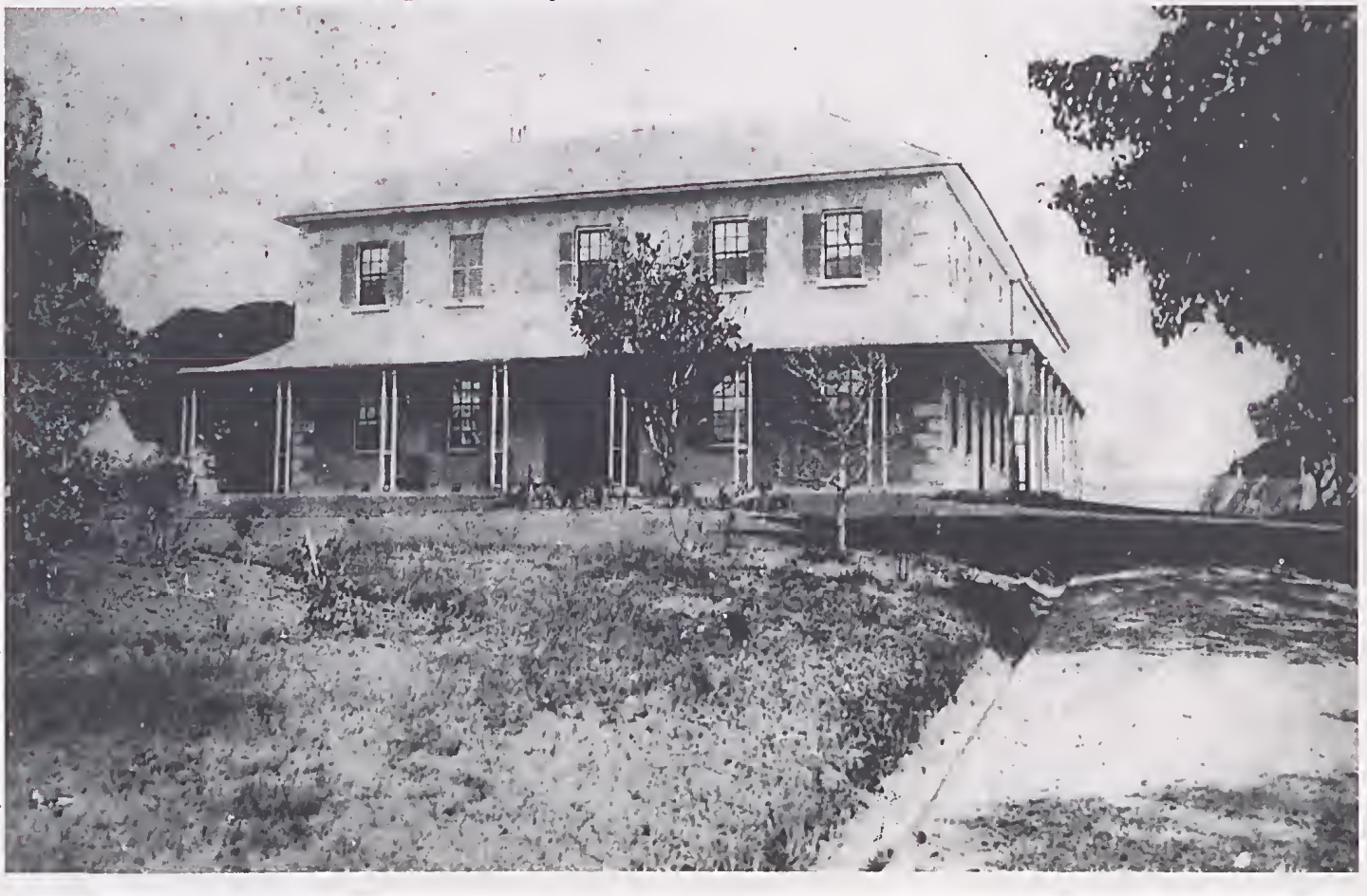
The property's unique survival as a largely intact estate with an unbroken chain of occupancy has allowed the survival of major garden and interior elements of every period of its history to the present.[4] This layering of artefacts and fashions is especially prevalent in the gardens where designs and physical details such as edging, fencing, planting containers, bed designs and paths provide a case history for the study of the development of garden practices.

The physical and botanical characteristics of the gardens and grounds have been well-documented.[5] The estate is significantly sited approximately midway between Parramatta and Windsor. Rouse Hill began as a grant of 450 acres (182 hectares) and grew to 1200 acres (486 hectares) by Rouse's death. Now reduced to 25 acres (10 hectares), the house and gardens are oriented to the north-east and the elevation is seventy-one metres above sea-level. Topographically, the house and gardens sit atop a ridge which falls away gradually to all the cardinal points except the south-east where there is a significant grade.

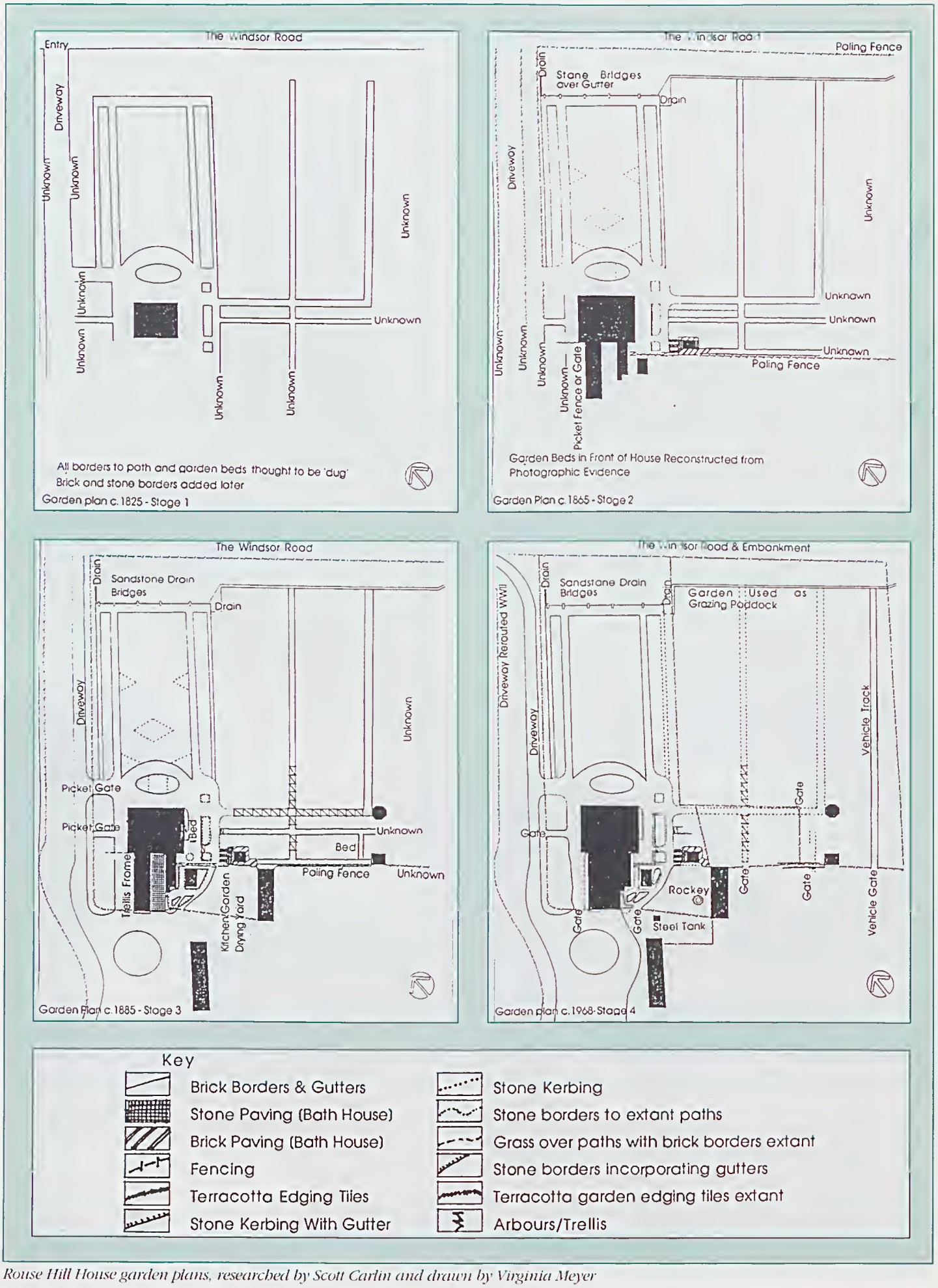
The printed and pictorial evidence for the nineteenth century gardens is scanty but a painstaking investigation of the garden's physical elements by Scott Carlin with documentation and drawings by Virginia Meyer has allowed a sequence of the garden's development to be developed as drawn overlays.[6]

The surviving physical evidence in the gardens includes borders in a variety of materials, fence and gate remnants, fragments of trellis and arbours, paving and numerous soil

Rouse Hill House, north-east view showing diamond-shaped beds, c. 1873



NSW Department of Planning



Rouse Hill House garden plans, researched by Scott Carlin and drawn by Virginia Meyer

displacements that become evident with the location's annual dry spells. The results of these physical remains have been plotted, then matched to pictorial evidence from photographs, drawings and engravings of the property as well as the known writings.

Using this information, four stages for the garden's development were hypothesised: c.1825; c.1865; c.1885; c.1968. These sequences are based on the consistency of materials (and manufacturing methods), changes in the family's occupancy and the developing fashions in Australian gardening generally accepted by garden historians.[7]

While the plans are self-explanatory, one can see the immediate effect of new technologies in Australian estate gardening with the replacement of palings with wire or the displacement of stone and brick edgings with terra-cotta.

These hypotheses await further testing by archaeology but each drought seems to bring to light more visual evidence that confirms the proposed stages of the garden's formation. When this physical evidence is matched with what is known of the Rouse Hill plantings, the results provide a very rewarding study of the development of the Australian estate garden from first quarter of the nineteenth century to the Edwardian era.

Michael Bogle

References

1 C.R. Thornton, *Rouse Hill House and the Rouses*, Privately printed, 1988 pp. 13-18.

2 *Ibid*, most of the Rouse family's earliest documents remain in private hands and aspects of the early history cannot be independently verified.

3 Jane Austen, *Persuasion*. 1818. Penguin edition. p.67. Written in 1815-16, this novel's summaries of contemporary English taste parallels the creation of Rouse Hill House.

4 James Broadbent and Michael Bogle, *Rouse Hill House Conservation and Management Plan*, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, 1990. James Broadbent's essay on the conservation plan for Rouse Hill establishes the uniqueness of the property in detail.

5 Craig Burton, *Rouse Hill House Landscape Analysis*, Heritage and Conservation Branch, Department of Environment and Planning, New South Wales, 1985, and Vegetation Survey, (1989) and other editions. Department of Public Works, New South Wales for the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales.

6 Scott Carlin is the present curator of Rouse Hill House, Virginia Meyer is a registrar with the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, Lyndhurst.

7 See Howard Tanner's *The Art of Gardening in Colonial Australia*, Art Gallery Directors' Council, 1979, for one summary of gardening styles in Australia.

Rouse Hill House gardens: the arbour leading to the Summer house, c. 1910



NSW Department of Planning

Victorian Branch

Report on Mansfield – Benalla Garden Tour 14-15 November 1992

Towards the end of the wettest Melbourne spring since 1916 and the second wettest on record, twenty AGHS members and friends set off to visit gardens in and around Mansfield and Benalla, a few hours to the north-east of Melbourne. Equipped with raincoats, umbrellas, galoshes, gumboots and sun hats, it was happily only the sun hats which we needed.

Our first visit was to Murrindindi Station, a few kilometres south of Yea. Settled in the 1840s, the garden in its present form is thought to date from the 1880s. Our first view of the house was of the oldest section, built in the mid-1840s; in the foreground was a peaceful pool with ancient oak trees and an *Arbutus*, surrounded by lawn. Looking back from the veranda, we could see an old cypress under which Alexander Miller, the first owner, who died in 1862, is buried. The property has had long spells in few sets of hands: it was owned by the Gordons from 1912 to 1965, and from 1972 has belonged to members of the Adams family. The view from the back of the house is down the lawn, with herbaceous borders on each side, towards an elegantly clipped cypress hedge which encloses a square rose garden. Beyond this, best seen from the upstairs veranda, are the flood plains of the Yea River, lightly lined with eucalypts, and the hills and sky in the distance.

The second garden was Wairere, just out of Mansfield, designed in the mid-1920s by Edna Walling. The original house was destroyed by fire in the 1940s and a new house built a few years later. The bones of the garden however remained: the stone retaining walls and the stone paths. During the late 1970s and early 1980s the garden became completely overgrown, and most of the design was hidden from view. When it was purchased by Maurie and Trish Bull ten years ago, they did not know what lay below the chaos and they were initially unaware of the garden's heritage. They began clearing and paths were gradually uncovered. Then in 1987 they were fortunate to obtain Edna Walling's plan. New pergolas were built to support the creepers they disentangled; a magnificent Wisteria was in full bloom at the time of our visit. Considerable use is made of perennials; Valerian and exquisite long spurred Aquilegia were flowering profusely.

Delatite, set on the edge of the Delatite River, which bustles through the property, was settled in the 1830s. The main house was built around 1890, but an earlier homestead built about 1860 remains adjacent to the house. It has been owned by three generations of the Ritchie family since 1903. The driveway leads towards the front of the house, and then circles a wide expanse of lawn. There are wonderful roses, both bush and climbing; Penelope was flowering profusely at the time of our visit. The grass tennis court is lightly screened with creepers and merges gently into the garden. There was a dazzling display of pure white *Nierembergia rivularis* growing in the paving near the side of the house. As well as the many roses, there were Viburnums, Kolkwitzias and wonderful trees including three old pear trees. The main rose garden is formally enclosed by box hedges.

On Sunday we headed to Benalla. Our first visit was to Wooleen, the garden of Mr and Mrs Laurie Ledger. The garden is relatively small, but its design, with concealed boundaries, soft curves and unexpected vistas, gives the impression of a very much larger garden. It was designed by Edna Walling in the late 1930s for the Ledgers; they have the plan which was drawn for them and we were able to look at it. The garden remains in keeping with the original plan and clearly has been beautifully maintained over the years. It is very much a garden of trees and shrubs, yet there is considerable variety in the colours and textures. Birch trees, a glorious *Ginkgo biloba* and a splendid golden *Gleditsia triacanthos* 'Sunburst' stand out against the darker foliage. There is colour variation in the trunks and stems and in the texture and shape of the leaves. It is a garden of dappled light and shade and it produces a feeling of great serenity. There is beautiful use of stone in wide shallow steps and in the rockery.



Anne Miller

View of the garden of Wooleen

Next we headed to the Benalla Botanical Gardens, which are directly across the lake from the Ledger's garden. After an enthusiastically guided tour by the Friends of the Benalla Botanical Gardens, we settled on the side of the lake and enjoyed an excellent lunch which was also provided by the Friends.

After lunch we visited Emu Bridge, a relatively new house and garden, less than ten years old, developed by Ken and Marilyn Bourke. In a courtyard grow herbs and roses, including one of my favourite roses, Fantin Latour. By contrast, most of the garden is quite open, with sweeping lawns and gently curving beds around the perimeter and also within the lawns. Good height is provided by mature trees, but it was the planting of the perennials, set against a backdrop of these trees and shrubs, which particularly drew my eye: for example, *Centranthus ruber*, the rosy red Valerian backed by a silver foliage plant; and again a profusion of long spurred pastel Aquilegia.

Our last visit was to Wolbunya. The property has been in the Straughton family for sixty years, with the present members of the family living there for the last five years. In front of the house are splendid shade trees: an enormous *Populus deltoides* (American Cottonwood Poplar) planted in 1931 and a *Liquidambar* of the same age. Shrub roses, particularly those of David Austin and perennials surround the tennis court.

The weekend was a very happy one and a great success; it owed a lot to the careful planning by Catherine Drew and John Hawker (which included notes on and plans of the gardens) and the support given by Helen Page and Di Renou.

Ann Miller

Calendar of Events

March 1993

Victorian Branch

- Sunday 21
 Ballarat Gardens Tour
 A tour of private and public gardens of Ballarat with special emphasis on Edwardian landscapes, designs and plants. Includes talk on Ballarat's public gardens. This function has been organised as part of the National Trust's 'Heritage Festival'. Bus leaves Herbarium at 8.00am. Cost; $35.00 (members), $40.00 (non-members), includes picnic lunch. Bookings close Monday 15 March. Enquiries; John Hawker, Ph. (03) 628 5477 (BH).
- Tuesday 30
 Significant Tree and Garden Study of Prahran
 An illustrated lecture by Mr Michael Looker, horticultural lecturer at VCAH-Burnley, and co-author of the City of Prahran's Significant Tree and Garden Study. This study is the first of its kind in Victoria, and lists 163 trees and 80 gardens. Prahran has a rich horticultural heritage and includes many outstanding trees and gardens designed by Walter Butler, Edna Walling and others. This function has been organised as part of the National Trust's 'Heritage Festival'. 8.00pm, 117 Greville Street, Prahran, $6.00 (members), $8.00 (non-members). Enquires: John Hawker, Ph. (03) 628 5477 (BH).

Tasmanian Branch

- Saturday 21-Sunday 22
 Scottsdale weekend
 Saturday 21: visit Woodlea Nurseries, the property of Mr and Mrs Jim Nicholson. View the garden and woodlots, and see the propagation nursery for all the Forest Resources Re-afforestation programme. A wide range of fuchsias for sale. Visit Anabels, Scottsdale for Devonshire tea. View the historic garden featuring giant rhododendrons. Finally a visit to Mr and Mrs David Ezzy's garden featuring a lovely collection of deciduous trees.
 Sunday 22: visit Mrs Francis Ransom's lovely garden, followed by a visit to Tonganah, Hopfield to see the harvesting. Then a visit to Bowood park and gardens, where lunch will be provided by the Ladies Committee of the Sea View Retirement Home (cost $6), This is followed by a visit to David and Elizabeth Pirie's Flower Houses to see the great variety of flowers, and a visit to Pipers Brook Vineyard for wine tasting and viewing. The weekend will conclude with a visit to Black Mountain Nursery.
 Cost for the weekend is $20. For bookings and details on accommodation please contact Fairie Nielsen, phone (004) 330 077.

May 1993

Victorian Branch

- Saturday 1 and Sunday 2
 Tour of private and public gardens in the Daylesford area. Bookings close Friday 23 April. Further details from Michael Searby; Ph. (03) 827 2175 or Fax (03) 827 2175.

Southern Highlands/Southern NSW Branch

- Saturday 1
 A day visit to Wentworth Falls in the Blue Mountains. Two gardens by Paul Sorensen and four large gardens to be inspected featuring wonderful old trees, stone walls and herbaceous plantings, including one garden with hanging swamps.
 Morning tea will be served.
 Cost $24.
 Bookings (048) 61 2925
 Information (048) 851 534

June 1993

Victorian Branch

- Tuesday 8
 Lecture on Edwardian Gardens, more details to follow.

August 1993

Victorian Branch

- Tuesday 10
 Annual General Meeting.
 Guest Speaker; Associate Professor Ken Taylor, Deputy Dean, Faculty of Environmental Design, University of Canberra, who will talk on Australian landscape painting from 1788 to the present.
 8.00pm, National Herbarium.

October 1993

National Management Committee

- 14-17 October

Annual conference in Tasmania.

November 1993

Victorian Branch

- (date to be confirmed)
 Tour of the Cathedral Ranges, with Rodger Elliot and visits to historic gardens. More details to follow.

December 1993

Victorian Branch

- Monday 6
 Christmas Party, Herbarium Lawn from 6.00pm followed by talk at 8.00pm.

Assistance with the Journal
The AGHS wishes to thank the following members of the Victorian Branch who helped mail out the previous journal issue: Diana Nicholas, Maureen Morrisey, Helen Page, John Joyce, Nan Grimwade, Diane Ellerton, Rosemary Manion. Thanks also to Tropman & Tropman Architects, for the use of their word processing facilities to assist in the publication of this journal issue.



Adelaide Botanic Garde

The Conservatory at Beechwood, Stirling

BEECHWOOD

A cast-iron conservatory in the Adelaide Hills

The oldest cast-iron conservatory in Australia is to be found at the Beechwood Heritage Garden which is located in Stirling in the Adelaide Hills. This heritage listed garden is managed by the Adelaide Botanic Garden and is generally open to the public for one month in the autumn and a month in the spring.

The conservatory was manufactured by William Boyd of Paisley in Scotland and imported in 1857 by Sir Thomas Elder for use on the Birksgate Estate. In 1969 the conservatory was moved from its foothills location in Birksgate up to Beechwood, where it housed the family's swimming pool.

During 1983 the staff of the Botanic Gardens dismantled and conserved the glasshouse and removed the swimming pool which was causing considerable deterioration to the cast-iron. Since its conservation, the Beechwood conservatory has been used for flower shows, chamber music concerts and public receptions to the delight of visitors. The conservatory has now joined the Beechwood garden on the Register of the National Estate.

Brian Morley

JULIE KEEGAN
GARDEN LOVERS TOURS

Julie Keegan M.A.I.H. takes small parties to visit private houses and gardens and will introduce you to interesting gardening personalities.

1993 PROGRAMMES

APRIL/MAY	South of France, Tuscany Italian Lakes
JUNE	Southern Ireland and/or England and France
SEPTEMBER	Dordogne, Provence and Tuscany

FOR BROCHURE:
JULIE KEEGAN
7 Cove Street
Watsons Bay,
Sydney 2030
Tel: (02) 337 1147
Fax: (02) 337 6782

FOR RESERVATION:
CASANNA TRAVEL
203/233 New South Head Road
Edgecliff 2027
Tel: (02) 327 4699
Licence No. B1726

Registered by Australia Post Publication No. NBH 1733